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CAUCASUS RAILROADS CRITICIZED; IMPROVEMENTS REPORTED

CAUCASUS RAILROADS SNARL TANK CARS -- Dagens Nyheter, No 86, 30 Mar 50

Bitter criticism of conditions in Soviet industry and economy occurs rather frequently in the Soviet press, but it is not frequent that Russian agencies provide as much valuable information in that connection as appeared recently in the Ministry of Railroads' newspaper Gudok.

The newspaper reports that conditions in the railroad network in the Caucasus are so terrible that machine-tractor stations in large parts of the Ukraine and elsewhere have no oil, despite the fact that spring planting should have begun long ago.

During February and much of March, thousands of tank cars blocked the Caucasus railroads, the newspaper states. At Makhachkala, the terminal of the Transcaucasus Railroad System from the Grosny oil fields, 600 tank cars destined for the northern USSR are piled up. This has thrown the entire port organization into disorder, with the result that oil tankers engaged in Volga traffic cannot go in, to the great detriment of Stalingrad and other industrial sites along the river. It is estimated that the important Ordzhonikidze System is 10,000 tank cars behind for the past year.

Guilt for this catastrophic blow to the economy in the South, the newspaper continues, rests on the shoulders of Robel, head of the Caucasus Railroad Okrug, Osvetinskiy, head of the Traffic Administration of the Caucasus Railroad Okrug, and Voskanov, head of the Ordzhonikidze Railroad System, who failed to take the necessary steps in time to avert the chaos on the Caucasus systems. This has occurred despite a long period of good weather in the entire southern part of the USSR! Much could have been done to rectify the calamitous conditions, as most of the railroad stations have four and five extra locomotives.

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Poor management, Gudok says, is the chief cause of this deplorable state of affairs. Osvetinskiy was satisfied that the tank cars were full, and did not worry whether they were moving or not. On one day, only 35-40 percent of the cars that should have been dispatched were cleared and sent on their way at the most important stations.

Recently, a special expert was sent to Makhachkala from Moscow to straighten things out, but instead of getting at the root of the trouble, he began by bawling out people for little details which offended his eye. Everything remained as it was before, and at the great junction of Mineral'nyye Vody, traffic from Groznyy had to be rerouted to another port far from there. Great expense and still greater chaos resulted.

It is estimated that only 15-20 percent of the oil that should have been delivered to the North long ago is actually on the way. The rest is simply sitting because the officials cannot agree on how the traffic should be directed. Although the major portion of the Caucasian railroad systems are electrified, nothing is being done about the fact that the locomotives used are steam-driven and even then are being utilized only 60 percent.

Official dissatisfaction with the oil depots is even worse. Viscous oil is being dumped into tank cars which have been washed and prepared for gasoline. "One would believe," Gudok says, "that the Caucasian railroad systems are simply a playground for overgrown boys."

LATVIAN SHORE SECTION BEING ELECTRIFIED -- Sovetskaya Latvija, No 74, 28 Mar 50

Electrification of the Riga-Kemeri shore line of the Latvian Railroad System was begun this year. It is planned to complete the basic construction operations and begin electric train traffic on the Riga-Dubulty sector by 21 July 1950.

MOSCOW-KATUARY LINE TO BE ELECTRIFIED -- Moskovskaya Pravda, No 32, 28 Mar 50

In 1950 electrification of the Moscow-Katuary line of the Moscow-Kiev Railroad System will be completed.

STALIN SYSTEM GETS NEW STATION BUILDINGS -- Pravda Ukrainy, No 74, 28 Mar 50

This year 18 new station buildings will be put into service on the Stalin Railroad System. Construction of station buildings has begun in Dnepropetrovsk, Simferopol', and Yevpatoriya. Construction of new station buildings is being completed in Novo-Moskovsk and Marganets.

LENINGRAD SYSTEM LOCOMOTIVES BURN SHALE -- Leningradskaya Pravda, No 71, 24 Mar 50

The Leningrad Railroad System first began to use shale as fuel for locomotives last year. Since then tens of thousands of tons of shale have been burned in locomotive fireboxes. The use of shale has enabled a considerable reduction in the amount of coal hauled into Leningrad over long distances.

Not long ago A. Vasil'yev, docent at the Leningrad Institute of Railroad Transport, worked out a new fuel mixture for locomotives consisting of third-grade shale and low-grade coals. Such a mixture is being used for the first time.

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Test runs made out of the Leningrad-Vitebsk Marshaling Depot have shown that the new mixture gives good steam formation. The mixture is being used successfully in other depots of the system.

CENTRAL ASIA LOCOMOTIVES TO USE NEW AIR PUMP DESIGN -- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, No 55, 14 Mar 50

Two workers of the Rybtsovka depot of the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad System have worked out a change in the design of the steam distributor head for locomotive air pumps. This change will be introduced in all depots of the railroad systems of the Central Asia Railroad Okrug.

5,000-TON TRAIN -- Pravda Ukrainy, No 65, 16 Mar 50

A locomotive engineer of the Pologi depot recently took an above-norm-weight train weighing 5,000 tons to the "Zaporozhstal'" Plant. The weight of the train exceeded the norm by 150 percent.

NEW RAILROAD SCIENTIFIC CENTER -- Moskovskaya Pravda, No 35, 31 Mar 50

The All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Railroad Construction and Planning was recently created and has begun work. The institute is to work out scientific and technical problems of railroad construction and planning. One of its main problems is to reduce construction time and costs. It will handle questions of the improvement of technology and mechanization of railroad construction and will undertake the designing of new machinery. The institute has ten departments.

SUMMER SCHEDULE APPROVED -- Sovetskaya Belorussiya, No 67, 1 Apr 50

The Ministry of Transportation has approved the summer schedule for passenger-train traffic. In accordance with this schedule, direct passenger service between Minsk and Sochi and between Minsk and Simferopol' has been established.

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